



Center for Governmental Studies

STATE ADMINISTRATION

Exhibit No. 4
Date 3/13/09
Bill No. HB 146

January 8, 2009

Representative Dennis Himmelberger
Chairman, State Administration Committee
Montana Legislature
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

POSTMARKED

JAN 08 2009

Re: House Bill No. 146

Dear Representative Himmelberger:

We have received a copy of a bill introduced by Representative Gary MacLaren at the request of the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices. House Bill No. 146 would significantly increase disclosure of campaign activities in Montana elections.

House Bill No. 146 in Section 13.37-230 (2) provides that campaigns must provide itemization on how campaign expenditures are spent. Without this legislation and under current law, it is possible for campaigns to hide how they are spending money. A candidate or committee could merely list ABC Consulting Company as the vendor, and the public would have no idea of how ABC Consulting was spending the funds. It is important to know if ABC is buying TV time, newspaper ads, mailing lists or any other types of legitimate campaign. This addition to the law will also reduce the possibility of campaigns spending funds on non-election related activities, such as personal use.

This proposal will bring Montana into conformity with at least 16 other states that require such information to be reported. In my view, it is essential to have such a provision if campaign disclosure is to be meaningful. Without such a law, campaign spending disclosure can be considered merely a concept, not a reality.

The Center for Governmental Studies is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has studied campaign laws since 1983. It has developed a Model Campaign Disclosure Law and works on the Campaign Disclosure Project, which annually grades states on their campaign disclosure laws. I have testified before a number of state legislatures and have assisted many others in developing campaign finance legislation.

Please feel free to call on me if you should have any questions or comments.

Best wishes,

Robert M. Stern
President



Center for Governmental Studies

Faxed
1/12/08

January 8, 2009

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